

# Legislative News



April 16, 2010

## Plans to Reboot State Government Continue to Move Forward

[Governor Nixon](#) and legislators are working together to advance proposals to dramatically redesign state government, including the merger of health and human services-related departments, public safety departments, and education departments. The proposal to create a single department of education will likely require constitutional amendments and statutory revisions.

[Senator Charlie Shields' SB 1057](#) has generally been considered a likely vehicle for the statutory changes necessary to create a department of education. That bill was approved by the Senate this week – but without language pertaining to K-12 and higher education.

Constitutional changes would be accomplished by the passage of resolutions in the House and Senate, then voter approval in either August or November. Senator Shields has filed [SJR 44](#), another potential vehicle for changes related to education, which has been voted out of the [Senate General Laws Committee](#) and is now on the calendar for potential consideration by the full Senate. Senator Shields has also filed [SJR 45](#), which describes what the governing board of the new department of education would look like. SJR 45

was heard by the Senate General Laws Committee on Wednesday. Shields offered a substitute version of the original bill. In the substitute, the state board of education would include thirteen members: one from each congressional district and one representative from early childhood education, one from the K-12 sector, one from higher education, and one with experience in economic development. Shields told the committee that the commissioner of education would be hired and fired by the

board, not the governor. He also indicated that the resolution is a work in progress and that there will likely be substantial changes as it makes its way through the legislative process. The committee had no questions for Senator Shields during the hearing, and they gave unanimous approval to the resolution.



## LEGISLATIVE NEWS



## House Committee Considers Bright Flight Changes

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) considered [SB 733](#), sponsored by [Senator David Pearce](#), this week. The bill clarifies some issues related to the [Bright Flight scholarship](#). It directs the [MDHE](#) to fully fund \$3,000 awards for all students in the top 3% before making any awards to students in the top fourth and fifth percentiles. It also codifies some current practices associated with the Bright Flight program, such as when the cut score used to determine eligibility is set and the fact that home schooled students may be eligible to receive awards. Finally, the bill will extend the length of time

students who enter the military can defer their awards.

A representative of the [University of Missouri](#) also indicated that SB 733 may be amended to include language allowing public colleges and universities that partner with private businesses to commercialize inventions and other discoveries to protect certain kinds of sensitive records from public disclosure.

The committee is likely to vote on SB 733 early next week.

## Budget Update: Senate Floor

This week the Senate passed all FY 2011 budget bills, including of course the higher education budget. The most significant change was that the full Senate replaced the \$14.8 million that was cut higher education institutional operating budgets by the [Appropriations Committee](#) last week. As there is no longer a difference between the House and Senate on the core budgets for the institutions, this will not be an item that the conference committee will have before them. The agreement between the two chambers on this item at the

level of the governor's recommendation also preserves the agreement to hold any funding cut to 5.2% in exchange for flat tuition for in-state undergraduate students.

There were no other changes made to [HB 2003](#) on the Senate floor. Thus the major differences to be resolved in conference committee are the \$6.5 million increase added by the House for [Bright Flight](#), the Senate's additional \$6.5 million cut from [Access Missouri](#) beyond the \$6.5 million the House had already cut. There

are also differences in the [MDHE](#) administrative budget and each of the UM-related budget items including [MOREnet](#) and the [UM Hospitals and Clinics](#).

Sometime next week conferees will be named and the conference committees will begin working to resolve differences and finalizing a budget. May 7 is the deadline for delivering the budget to the governor.

## Senate Education Committee Approves Scholarship Changes

The [Senate Education Committee](#) approved two scholarship bills this week. [Representative Jake Zimmerman's HB 1858](#), which would officially bring the [Minority and Underrepresented Environmental Literacy Program](#) from [DNR](#) to the [MDHE](#), was approved with language that would also move the [Minority Teaching Scholarship Program](#) currently administered by [DESE](#) to the MDHE. The bill is a "consent bill," which means that

it is a non-controversial bill that can be approved with fewer steps than other bills.

The committee also approved [Representative Dan Brown's HB 2147](#). The bill exempts certain students who are dependents of recently retired military personnel from the three-year attendance requirement under the A+ Program. HB 2147 is also a consent bill.





## Higher Education Appointments Confirmed

Several nominations for higher education institutional boards were confirmed by the Senate this week including:

- Peter Gregory to the [Missouri Western State University Board of Governors](#).
- Lucas Freeland as the student representative on [Truman State University's Board of Governors](#).
- Brian Kelly as the student representative on [Southeast Missouri State University's Board of Re-](#)

[gents](#).

- Ronald Dirick Clark's reappointment to the [Missouri Western State University Board of Governors](#).

Each appointee went through a confirmation hearing in the [Gubernatorial Committee](#). After being approved by the committee, their appointments went to the Senate floor for a vote before they were officially confirmed.

## Nothing New on Access Award Amount Bills

[Representative Gayle Kingery's HB 1812](#), which would change [Access Missouri](#) award amounts starting in 2014-15, has been put on the calendar for potential consideration in the House but has not yet been taken up for debate on the floor. Senators [Kurt Schaefer's](#) and [David Pearce's SB 784](#), which would also change [Access Missouri](#) award amounts, was taken up briefly on the Senate floor at the end of March but has not been debated again in the Senate.

## Upcoming Committee Meetings

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) will meet for an executive session on Monday, April 19 at 2:00 p.m. in the HR6. The committee will hear the following bill:

[Sen. Bill Stouffer's SB 987](#), which increases the statutory award amount for research projects funded by the University of Missouri Board of Curators.

The [House Higher Education Committee](#) will also meet for on Tuesday, April 20 at 8:00 a.m. in the HR6. The committee will hear the following bill:

[Rep. Sue Schoemehl's HB 1956](#), which authorizes an income tax deduction for certain individuals for 100% of tuition and fees for up to the last 18 hours required to complete his or her bachelor degree from a public four-year university.